

Fire Station Tours



Fire station tours are the most common public interaction for firefighters and departments. Tours give departments an opportunity to deliver fire safety messages and to market their mission of keeping communities safe.

Guidelines for Successful Fire Station Tours

- **Contact the Group**
Contact the school or tour group before the day of the tour. Discuss what the group is expecting and what you can offer. Check if any preparations are required due to special circumstances.
- **Deliver 1 or 2 Fire Safety Message(s) to the Group**
Every tour is an educational opportunity. Make sure your visitors leave with one or two age-appropriate fire safety messages they can use.
- **Use a Lesson Plan**
Lesson plans help to ensure that a consistent, age-appropriate fire safety message is delivered regardless of who leads the program. A chief officer or the public fire educator can develop the plan.
- **Curriculum Planning Guidebook**
Use the Massachusetts Curriculum Planning Guidebook for information on age-appropriate fire safety behaviors, lesson plan development and child developmental guidelines.
- **Tour Safety**
Establish safety rules as soon as the group arrives. Explain what happens if firefighters have to leave on an emergency call.
- **Use Props**
Props enhance lessons. Consider using one of the following props when delivering a fire safety message: a smoke detector with a battery, a blanket to simulate smoke (stay low under smoke), a phone to dial 9-1-1, etc.
- **Firefighting Gear**
Teaching children to go towards a firefighter and to recognize a firefighter in their gear as a helper are important lessons. However, it is difficult to guarantee that a firefighter's gear is clean and free of any contaminants. To keep children safe, use a dedicated set of clean firefighting gear or child-size gear when allowing children to touch or wear gear.

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- **Fire Helmets**

Never allow children to wear real fire helmets. Firefighter helmets are heavy and present a contamination risk to both child and firefighter. Use plastic helmets or have children make their own helmets in class.

- **Handouts**

Handouts should be age appropriate. Make sure you have handouts for both children and the adults on the tour. Some handouts for adults include: smoke alarms, developing and practicing a home escape plan, and cooking safety. Delivering handouts to adults and to children allows your safety messages to be reinforced at home.

**Westford Fire Department
Student Awareness of Fire Education
Fire Station Tours -2**

**Recognizing the Firefighter as a Community Helper
Safety Words**

The following is an introduction to curriculum planning. A quick overview explaining the different topics has been included giving the presenter some background information. The presenter should read the entire lesson plan before providing public education. This will assure consistency with each age group as well as meeting S.A.F.E. objectives.

Within the community, there are recognizable people that children will learn to associate with within the town where they live. Often children misinterpret firefighters as police officers. With this in mind, the presentation needs to address this issue. Children at this age are able to comprehend that firefighters help people in the community they live by extinguishing fires. However, by personalizing the presentation with your own experience, this will expand their knowledge that firefighters do more than fight fires. Explain that firefighters go to all kinds of emergencies such as car accidents, smoke detector alarms, provide first aid and put out brush fires and building fires. This will demonstrate to children that firefighters do more than fight fires.

Firefighters need to take into account that at this age they are egocentric (center of attention) however dislikes being singled out even praise. They are inquisitive and may ask endless questions. Keep the presentation short and to the point. Attention span for children at this age is about fifteen to twenty-five minutes. They enjoy details and memorization that could be coordinated with organized games.

Time Frame

Presentation time should not last for more than twenty-five minutes. Allow for question period at the end of the presentation. Rules for question periods, designate a timeframe, better if you direct the questions. Yes or No questions work well. Allow for at least ten minutes for question period.
Total timeframe = 35 minutes

Attire

Firefighters uniform, look professional. You may put your gear on one piece at a time after you have explained their purpose.

Presentation

Introduce yourself, using proper title and last name. "Hello, my name is Firefighter _____ and I am a member of the _____ Fire Department. I am here today to speak to you about fire safety. Today I would like to talk to you about _____. Before I start, there are some important rules that I would like to tell all of you.

I have some very important things to say today so I ask that no one talk when I am talking. When it is time for questions, please raise your hand and I will call on you. Only one person can talk at a time so that we can all listen.

Presentation

1. Recognizing a Firefighter as a Community Helper

Explain what you do as a firefighter. Talk about the different types of calls that you respond to. Show students the ambulance and one of the engines. Show the students the different types of equipment and how and why you use them. Put on your gear one piece at a time. **DO NOT LET STUDENTS WEAR YOUR GEAR.**

Put on SCBA and explain how it works. Tell the students that you may sound and look different. Remember that the students may not be able to hear you but you can hear them.

Children should not wear firefighters gear or helmets. Do not use large words such as structure or apparatus. Keep things simple for them to understand.

2. Safety Words

You will introduce new vocabulary. Be careful not to confuse students with large words. Do not worry about redundancy, good time to reinforce new words that they are learning from you.

Review

Briefly review what they have learned. Emphasize that you were happy that they came to visit and you look forward to seeing them again.

Activities

Students at this age enjoy organized games. Below are some suggestions that the presented can use. The only roadblock you have is the limit of your imagination. Remember to keep it simply, short and to the point, but most of all have fun.

Firefighter Gear and Tools

Show students the type of gear that a firefighter wears. Briefly explain why you wear the equipment and what it protects you from. In the event that you have CLEAN gear, you may dress a teacher. **DO NOT DRESS CHILDREN IN YOUR GEAR.**

Separate gear from tools. Show students different types of gear and tools, and place them into groups.

Firefighter Gear	Firefighter Tools	Home Fire Safety Items
Helmet	Ax	Smoke detector
Coat / Bunker pants	Nozzle	Baking soda
Boots	Spanner wrench	Home fire extinguisher